

International Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 3 March 2006



Mayor's Office, City of Houston

Office of International Affairs & Development

Message from the Mayor



Bill White

This month, I am pleased to announce the kick-off of the first meetings of all seven of the Mayor's International Affairs & Development Councils (MIADC). These councils, formed from our vibrant international communities, reflect our city's many diverse strengths. I personally look forward to working with each MIADC and I am truly confident that the leadership and guidance the MIADC can offer will be a tremendous asset to Houston's continued growth in the new century.

We are proud to share with you the MIADC kick-off and many other international events entailed in this month's edition of the *International Newsletter*.

Bill White, Mayor

Message from the Director



Each month, we receive numerous messages of encouragement and support from the community:

"Many thanks for sending me issues of the International Newsletter. I find it very interesting and informative, and am able to participate in some of the events by keeping updated through the schedule in the Newsletter."

*Ed Hotard
Chairman of the Board, Monito Group*

We will continue to serve you with great pride. Thank you.

Helen T. Chang, Director

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February 2006 Highlights

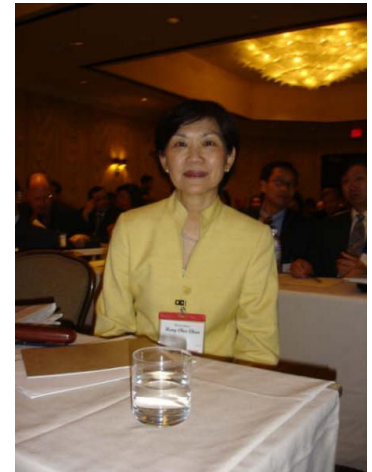
Ambassadors' Regional Perspectives Draw Houston Crowds

On February 3, the Asia Society – Texas held its annual *Ambassador's Forum and Corporate Conference*, and this year the Conference focused on the relations between China and the economic bloc of Southeast Asian nations. In preparation for this heavily attended event, the Asia Society – Texas succeeded in scheduling well-known regional scholars, business leaders, retired diplomats and their Excellencies, ambassadors of Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, as well as Singapore.

Did You Know?

China-ASEAN economic and trade ties have hit the fast lane since the Framework Agreement on China-ASEAN Comprehensive Economic Cooperation was signed last November, with a proposed free trade area involving 1.7 billion people, products worth almost US\$2,000 billion and trade totaling US\$1,200 billion.

Source: <http://english.people.com.cn>



Singaporean Ambassador Chan Heng Chee

Singaporean Ambassador Chan Heng Chee spoke on the overall development of ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) and their bilateral ties to China. Featured at the afternoon luncheon was Chinese Ambassador Zhou Wenzhong, who detailed the advantages a growing China can offer to the world economy, particular to Houston and the U.S. – **By Matthew Shailer**

India Reaches Out to Houston Businesses

On February 6, the Greater Houston Partnership, in conjunction with the Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC) of India and the Consulate General of India in Houston, hosted a trade forum at the Partnership.

Did You Know?

The annual growth rate of India's software exports since 1991 has consistently been over 50%. One of India's strongest resources is its English-speaking scientific professionals, ranking as the 2nd largest group in the world after the U.S.

Source: www.economywatch.com

The forum featured members of the EEPC's trade mission to the United States and Canada, and emphasized extensive one-to-one business development meetings between Indian suppliers and Houstonian customers. The underlying theme was the promotion of the image of India as a full economic partner. Executive Director Jagdip Ahluwalia of the Indo American Chamber of Commerce stated, "India is not simply a supplier of goods but a market for local products as well." – **By Matthew Shailer**



Executive Director Jagdip Ahluwalia, Senior Vice President Keith Miceli and Consul General Shri S.M. Gavai welcome Indian Trade Mission leaders.

HISD Creates College-Bound Culture

On February 7, at the annual *State of the Schools* luncheon in Houston, community and business leaders received a sneak-peak at the plans to develop one of Houston's greatest resources, its students. The annual luncheon was held at the George R. Brown Convention Center and drew upwards of 1,900 people in attendance.

Did You Know?

HISD reflects Houston's great diversity; the approximately 210,500 students whom HISD serves are a diverse population that is 59% Hispanic, 29% African-American, 9% White, and 3% Asian/Pacific Islander.

Source: www.houstonisd.org

The luncheon, which served as a platform for the District Superintendent and school leaders to discuss their goals and new initiatives for the proceeding year, focused on the creation of a 'college-bound culture' for each student in 2006. To fulfill that ambition, HISD plans to increase its emphasis on math and science education, as well as to continue successful programs like Reach Out to Dropouts, which help to ensure that every student has a place within the academic environment HISD provides. – **By Matthew Shailer**



HISD Superintendent Abelardo Saavedra outlines HISD's 2005 successes and 2006 priorities at the annual State of the Schools luncheon.



Oliver Luck and Michelle Ballard

First Soccer Franchise and Largest Fiesta Latina Brought to Houston

To celebrate the birth of the first Houston Major League Soccer (MLS) franchise and the first *Expo Comida Latina Texas*, the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce hosted a networking breakfast and mini-trade fair on February 15. Among the speakers were Oliver Luck, president of the Houston MLS franchise, and Brian Randall, group vice president of Diversified Business Communications.

Oliver Luck predicts great success for the soccer team, formerly called San José Earthquakes, here in Houston. "Soccer is a universal sport that should have great success in a city that is so diversified," said Luck, who believes the game should be a good cultural experience as the fans will be from many different countries.

As we welcomed the future success of the soccer franchise, Brian Randall spoke about the upcoming *Expo Comida Latina Texas* in Houston, the largest Hispanic food and beverage event in North America, which will be held at the George R. Brown Convention Center on April 24-25. Bringing more than 300 leading suppliers of Hispanic food and beverage from 15 countries, the Expo will offer the entire Hispanic food and beverage industry to explore. – **By Viridiana Jiménez**

Did You Know?

The former Houston "1836" team will have its first game on April 2, against the Colorado Rapids at Robertson Stadium.

State of Harris County Address: New Year Brings New Challenges

With hurricanes Katrina and Rita's tremendous impacts on the gulf coast, the topics of disaster preparedness and regional mobility were, unsurprisingly, at the core of Harris County Judge Robert Eckels' 2006 *State of the County Address*.

Speaking before the Greater Houston Partnership on February 23, Judge Eckels summarized how Harris County, together with the federal, state, and local government agencies, worked out a detailed disaster relief plan. Emphasizing that the massive undertaking would not have been possible without the united effort from all facets of our community, Judge Eckels expressed his deepest gratitude. Continuing



Judge Robert Eckels

Did You Know?

Harris County is the largest county in Texas and the 3rd largest county in the United States, covering 1,777 square miles. It is larger than 21 states with 3,400,578 residents. This is an over 20% increase in population since 1990.

his remarks, he highlighted the county's achievements in providing higher-standard services to its residents, namely in the areas of healthcare, flood control, transportation, public and neighborhood safety, thus enhancing the county's quality-of-life.

"We understand in Harris County and our community that there is more that unites us than divides us," acknowledged Judge Eckels. He concluded his speech by speaking on the opportunities "...for progress, for lifting lives, and for finding positive, innovative solutions to our toughest problems." – **By David Chang**



Jordanian Ambassador Karim Kavar shares his great hope for future partnerships between Jordan and the United States.

Jordanian Ambassador Presents the Heart of the Middle East

To welcome Jordanian Ambassador Karim Kavar's visit to Houston, the Rotary Club hosted a luncheon on February 23 focusing on Jordan's unique position in the Middle East.

Ambassador Kavar identified factors that make Jordan a close ally and partner of the United States. He characterized Jordan as the "heart of the Middle East," referring to Jordan's geographic location between Iraq and Israel. Over the past few years Jordan has worked hard at improving relationships with its neighbors, and Ambassador

Kavar anticipates these strong ties will yield many benefits both in the Middle East region and the World. – **By Tiffany Ching**

Did You Know?

The U.S. Department of Commerce is pleased to certify the 3rd annual "Rebuild Iraq" trade exhibition and conference to be held on May 08-11, 2006, in Amman, Jordan. Last year's event attracted almost 1,000 exhibitors from 44 countries and more than 13,000 visitors.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce

Canada's West-Oil and Gas Opportunities

With Canada's oil and gas industry on the rise, the country continues to play a prominent role in oil and gas production. On February 28, the University of Houston International Trade Center, in collaboration with the Canadian Trade Commission and the U.S. Commercial Service, held the *Canada's West – Oil and Gas Opportunities Conference*. Among the speakers were Canadian Trade Commissioner Diane Simsovic, James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy representative Amy Myers Jaffe and, via videoconference from Calgary, U.S. Commercial Service Principal Commercial Officer Terry Sorgi, as well as Vice President of Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers Greg Stringham.

Those in attendance had the opportunity to learn more about conducting trade business with Canada. The keynote speakers covered issues on Canada's future holdings and its prospects of becoming a reliable supplier of energy. "We hope to bring the Canadian oil to the gulf coast market since our reserves are large enough," Greg Stringham stated. – **By Tiffany Ching**

Did You Know?

Canada holds 175 billion barrels in oil sands reserves, which ranks 2nd to Saudi Arabia in global oil reserves.

A Successful Entry into Hungarian Market

Since the Republic of Hungary's accession into the European Union (EU) as a full member in 2004, the Ministry of Economy and Transport, Hungarian Investment and Trade Development Agency, and seven respected companies initiated the *HunSider* program to promote and attract foreign investment. This program was launched in Europe two years ago and has been expanded to the United States.

Did You Know?

The commercial real estate market in Budapest is relatively young, as the first Western-style modern office building was built in 1991. The completion of the East-West Business Center office building started the series of new office developments that took place in the early and mid-1990's in Budapest to provide modern office space to companies seeking professional office accommodation.

On February 28, the Greater Houston Partnership presented a half-day business seminar, *HunSider*, to brief Houston companies on the market entry into Hungary. Joining the

seminar were Hungarian Honorary Consul General Phillip Aronoff and a trade delegation from Hungary. With Hungary's accession into the European Union, several changes have been implemented in the Hungarian tax legislations during the past few years to comply with the EU tax directives. "The Ministry of Finance grants tax incentives for a maximum 10-year period and investors can enjoy tax benefits on software development wage cost," said Casaba László. – **By Alex Tang**



Former Finance Minister
Casaba László

U.S. -China Relations Founded in Mutual Interest

On February 24, the Asia Society – Texas introduced the U.S. Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, the Honorable Clark T. Randt, Jr., to guests at the Four Seasons Hotel. As part of

Did You Know?

In 2005, the Sino-U.S. economic and trade relations were further enhanced, with China becoming the 4th largest export market of the United States. By October 2005, the United States remained China's largest export market and 2nd largest trade partner.

Source: www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/1/default.htm

his introduction, Ambassador Randt delivered the “China Update,” an informative policy speech detailing his view of the complex and rewarding relations between China and the United States. Ambassador Randt believes that education has been the focus of the China Central Government over the past years; and as China's economy continues to expand, education will play a fundamental role. – **By Alex Tang**



Ambassador Clark T. Randt, Jr

Upcoming Major Events

Le Gala de la Francophonie Fills Houston with French Panache

On March 1, L'Alliance Française de Houston will pay homage to the spirit of French-speaking culture that has been strongly linked to Houston. The gala to be held at the magnificent La Colombe d'Or will share the ambiance and refinement of French and Cajun cultures with Houstonians through assorted food, wine as well as energetic Jazz and Zydeco music.

Houston's strong attachment to French-speaking culture comes through our proximity to Louisiana and especially the city of New Orleans. The gala's theme: “L'Esprit de la Nouvelle Orléans” honors this connection, and all proceeds will benefit the L'Alliance Française's sister organization in New Orleans to help it resume its mission to advance the presence of French language and culture.

– **By Matthew Shailer**

Did You Know?

There has been a French presence in Houston almost since the city's beginnings. Among the 613 foreign-born residents who made up a third of Houston's small population in 1850, 8% were French. In 1860, French population accounts for almost 10% of the total international population in Houston, making them the 4th largest group of foreigners. In 2005, more than 2,300 French nationals registered at the French Consulate in Houston.

Source: <http://www.houstonhistory.com>

Microsoft 2006 Global Energy Forum

Microsoft will host its *2006 Global Energy Forum* on March 7 at the Hilton Americas Hotel in Houston. Among the keynote speakers are former-President George H. W. Bush, Sr. and President and CEO of Marathon Oil Corporation Clarence P. Cazalot, Jr.

Under the theme of “Peak Performance in Action: Accelerating Insight and Innovation,” the forum seeks to bring together a vertical sweep of multiple production, planning and logistical processes and increase the efficiency as well as profitability within the energy sector. For more information, contact 877-673-8368. – **By Viridiana Jimenez**

Did You Know?

In 2001, Texas was ranked #1 with the most total energy consumption in the U.S. with 12,028.8 trillion Btu. California ranked 2nd with 7,853.4 trillion Btu.

Source: <http://www.eia.doe.gov>

Japanese Minister Speaks on Global Partnership

A pop culture society, an undisputed metal shop and electronics lab to the world, Japan views economic partnerships with Houston in a significant way. To expand the existing bilateral ties between Japan and the city of Houston and to create greater dialogue between the two regions, Japanese Minister of Economic Development Hiroaki Ishii will visit Houston on March 7 and speak on “Japanese Businesses’ Global Perspective.”

Sponsored by the Japan-America Society of Houston, the luncheon to be held at the Petroleum Club of Houston will revolve around the theme “Tomorrow’s Economy Today: Business in the Asian Marketplace.” Nanotechnology commercialization will be covered by Dr. Bob Gower, president and CEO of Carbon Nanotechnologies of Houston. Dr. Arthur Alexander, professor at Georgetown University, will speak on Japan’s emergence from steady growth. For more information, contact 713-963-0121.

– **By Mary Jane Wakefield**

Did You Know?

Japan is

- the largest export market outside NAFTA (Canada and Mexico) for the United States. U.S. exports to Japan in 2004 were valued at \$54.4 billion (6.7% share).
- the 2nd largest foreign investor in the U.S. after the U.K. Japan’s direct investment in 2004 was valued at \$177 billion (11.6% share).
- the 3rd largest job creator after the U.K. (996,000) and Germany (674,000), whose companies created 599,000 jobs in 2003.

Source: www.us.emb-japan.go.jp

Emerging Business Summit and Best Business Practices

The Greater Houston Partnership's Emerging Business Council will host its half-day seminar, *Emerging Business Council Learning Summit*, at the Hilton Americas Hotel on March 9 to discuss how best to handle business practices within new business partnerships.

The seminar is expected to draw companies of various sizes in a mix of industries, whether seeking professional development or attempting to establish business contacts. Among the keynote speakers are Andrea Kates, founder of SUMA Partners, Walter Ulrich, president and CEO of Mincron Software Systems, and Mike Harrington, CPO of Shell Oil Products. The seminar will highlight the thriving business culture in Houston and will honor the high level of cooperation and interaction that makes Houston businesses unique in the nation. For more information, contact 713-844-3674.

– By Alex Tang

Did You Know?

Houston has over 350,000 business establishments with 98% being small businesses. By North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), the leading categories are health services, business services, wholesale trade-durable goods and food and beverage establishments.

Source: Houston SBA

Navigate the Purchasing Process with Mexico PEMEX

On March 10, the Greater Houston Partnership will host *Doing Business with PEMEX* seminar featuring representatives of Mexico's state owned petroleum company, PEMEX.

In addition to highlighting background information on upcoming tenders, the seminar will provide one-on-one meeting opportunities with the PEMEX presenters, including Commercial Officers Ellen Lenny-Pessagno and Renato Davia, National Oil Field Equipment Manufacturers and Delegates Society representative Robert Saucedo, Small Business Administration representative Najla Tanous and Bay-Inelectra representative Mike Martinez. The seminar will be held at the Greater Houston Partnership. For more information, contact 713-844-3636. Source: The Greater Houston Partnership

Did You Know?

Mexico is the world's 5th largest oil producer, and PEMEX, which generates 3.4 million barrels a day of crude oil, remains the largest oil company in Latin America and the Caribbean, and one of the 10 largest in the world.

Source: <http://www.ipsnews.net>

Training Helps International Export Business

As Houston's international export business continues to expand, many companies looking for a solid base from which to export their products have found Houston to be an ideal home. To better assist these companies, for the first time ever, a training seminar for current and future international business lenders sponsored by the Export - Import Bank will be held on March 10 at the Hilton Hotel Post Oak.

Did You Know?

Ex-Im Bank launched a pilot program to assist small businesses to obtain financing for their exports and has supported more than \$400 billion of U.S. exports — mainly to developing markets worldwide. They offer eligible exporters coverage for 100% of their export working capital financing needs. Interested firms must seek a loan of at least \$833,333 to qualify for a working capital guarantee.

Source: Ex-Im Bank

The seminar aims to provide an opportunity to work in partnership with Export-Import Bank as a delegated authority lender. In addition to covering practical information for financial institutions, the seminar will also include an extensive training and briefing for the Working Capital Guarantee Program on how to reduce the financial risk associated with lending, financing options, and how to qualify to become a delegated authority lender with Ex-Im Bank. For more information, contact 281-721-0467.

– **By Clifford Plowman**

Lieutenant General Highlights Developments in Iraq

On March 17, short months after the recent landmark elections in Iraq, members of the Greater Houston Partnership and the West Point Society will offer fellow Houstonians an inside perspective on the many economic, social and political developments taking place in Iraq. The luncheon to be held at the Westin Galleria Hotel will feature Lieutenant General Thomas F. Metz, who will speak on Iraq's achievements of the past year.

Did You Know?

Iraq officials hope to increase oil production from the current level of less than 2 million barrels per day to at least 3 million bpd by the end of the year, 4 million bpd by 2010, and 6 million bpd by 2015.

Source: <http://news.yahoo.com>

Born in North Carolina, Lieutenant General Metz assumed command of III US Corps on 7 February 2003 and served as ground commander in Iraq in charge of the Multi-National Corps for a 14-month period that completed with milestone first elections in January 2005. His first-hand and expert testimony will shed light on the past, present and future relationship with Iraq.

– **By Matthew Shailer**

Sister City Spotlight – Leipzig *Lipsk*

This month the International Newsletter will continue to showcase each one of Houston's 16 sister cities around the globe with a closer look at each distinctive locale. This month we feature Leipzig, Germany.

Houstonians will get an up-close look at their sister city Leipzig, Germany, this June when it serves as one of the sites of the 2006 Soccer World Cup. Houston's sister city since 1993, Leipzig is the hometown of Johann Sebastian Bach and the world-famous, 800 year-old St. Thomas's Boys Choir. As a result of the sister city relationship, in 1998 the St. Thomas Choir chose Houston to be their first U.S. performance venue in its history.



Leipzig, Germany

Did You Know?

Over the past few years, radical welfare reforms have changed the country's labor market beyond recognition. German labor costs have fallen dramatically and working hours are nearly back to 40 a week.

Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk>



With a population of 500,000, Leipzig began in the 7th

century when the Slavic Sorbians settled near the confluence of the rivers Elster and Parthe. They founded a trading post by the name of "Lipzk," which means "place by the lime trees." Granted its city charter in 1165, Leipzig quickly developed into a trade and commerce center. The city also became a hub of Central-European railroad traffic as a terminal for the first German long distance railroad. In 1895, it hosted the world's first textile sample exhibition and served as a leader among the world's exhibition centers until World War II. Over the past 10 years Leipzig has developed into a center of the service industry and is home to many banking houses.

Houston's business ties to Germany are strong. There are 39 Houston companies with subsidiaries in Germany, and 53 German-owned companies in Houston. In 2004, seaborne trade with Germany was valued at more than \$3.8 billion, accounting for nearly 20% of the port's trade with Western Europe.

The Houston-Leipzig Sister City Association hosts several cultural events and exchanges throughout the year. For more information on the association and their activities, please contact the Houston International Protocol Alliance at 713-227-3395. – **By Alma D. Maldonado**

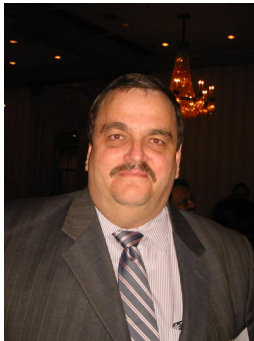
Special Thanks

Article submitted by Alma D. Maldonado, Houston International Protocol Alliance.

Meet the Consular Corps in Houston

Guatemala *República de Guatemala*

This month we go to a country with vibrant indigenous culture, active volcanoes, highland lakes and tropical wildlife to speak with the Honorable José Barillas-Trennert, Guatemalan Consul General in Houston, to discuss everything from the port to higher education partnership.



Consul General José Barillas-Trennert

The quality that the Honorable José Barillas-Trennert notices most about the city of Houston is its' rapid change. "When I first came here," Guatemalan Consul General José Barillas-Trennert points out, "the George R. Brown was not here; the Toyota Center was not here." A city of diversity and unprecedented growth, Houston stands out in the mind of Consul General Barillas-Trennert.

When asked to compare the potential held by the growing Guatemala and the outward-looking and international business ethos of Houston, Consul General Barillas-Trennert sees great partnership opportunities available in energy exploration and production, and in agriculture. The Port of Houston is a gateway for Guatemalan products, recognizes Consul General Barillas-Trennert, an entry through which no less than 50% of Guatemala's agricultural heavyweights, such as bananas and coffee, flow each year. The trade works both ways; Texas-based

Riviana Foods provides many food products to Guatemala, including the most-eaten ketchup for the entire country. The sister port agreements that have been in place between the Port of Houston and the Port of Santo Tomas de Castillo since the late 90's have improved business dealings for companies and investors in both regions. As Consul General Barillas-Trennert points out, trade as it applies to economics is only one of the many exciting opportunities presented by bilateral ties between Guatemala and the United States. Consul General Barillas-Trennert is especially proud of the deepening connection between American universities and their Guatemalan counterparts.



Map of Guatemala

Did You Know?

Consul General Barillas-Trennert has been at his present post for three years and has been in Houston for seven years working at consular affairs. Prior to joining the consulate service, he was a company representative to a frozen foods processor based in Guatemala. His years in business and academic experiences in the United States have given him a love for intercultural dialogue and the pursuance of business opportunities.

For example, the Texas A&M Guatemalan M.B.A. program, in which professors from A&M fly on weekends to Guatemala to conduct classes, highlights this connection starkly. The most important goal of the Guatemalan Consulate for 2006 continues to be to promote and serve the Guatemalan community, and to this end, Consul General Barillas-Trennert is harboring hope for a trade mission to be scheduled later this year. – **By Matthew Shailer**

International Hub: Saint Thomas' Center for International Studies

Houston is known for its local treasures; it is a city in which surprises wait around every corner. Nestled in the heart of the museum district, the University of Saint Thomas actively pursues the goal of placing Houston on the map as an international city.

One of the most unique traits that the University shares with its hometown is a commitment to internationalism. Saint Thomas' Center for International Studies, representing one of the University's largest student majors, coordinates the University's expansive studies abroad programs, and is the front line in welcoming international students. In fact, with the Center's continuing efforts, Saint Thomas ranks in the top 10% of national universities where students study abroad.



Gustavo Wensjoe

The Center, under the leadership of its Director, Peruvian-American political economist Dr. Gustavo Wensjoe, constructively and creatively approaches the challenges and opportunities presented within international politics, and instills within its students a comprehensive ethical framework based on academic theory, real world experience and leadership skills.

In achieving its goals, "the Center for International Studies responds to the increasing demands of globalization by producing professionals capable of effectively interacting across international boundaries," asserts Wensjoe.

The Center is designed as an incubator for those preparing to seek a career—whether through internships, study abroad or research opportunities. International Studies is at heart multi-disciplinary, and the Center encourages students to find their own unique tract. One of the capstone requirements for completion of the International Studies major is the senior thesis. International Studies is one of the few campus majors — and indeed one of the few majors statewide — that make such a requirement of their students.

Saint Thomas' Center for International Studies also brings the promise of continuing growth. The Center regularly hosts speaking engagements with regional experts and participates in international events held throughout the city. Yet what is perhaps the Center's most exciting plan is still in development: the establishment of a master's degree program in International Affairs. This program would be one of the few offered within Texas. For more information, visit www.stthom.edu. – **By Matthew Shailer**

Did You Know?

Saint Thomas was founded as a Catholic liberal arts institution a little less than 60 years ago from the vision of the order of Basilian fathers, and with the cooperation of Houston philanthropist Dominic de Menil.

4,875 students enrolled in Fall, 2003, students came from 32 states and 50 foreign countries; 47.4% were African American, Asian American, Hispanic and Native American.

The Global Bridge: The Bilateral U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce

Each month the International Newsletter will feature a section "The Global Bridge" introducing the chambers of commerce in Houston dedicated to promoting Houston's international image.

Founded in 1997, the Bilateral U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce aims to promote business, investment and cultural understanding between the U.S. and Arab world. It was formed by devoted individuals who felt the need for a chamber that would serve as a bridge linking these two important regions together.

A member based organization, the Bilateral recognizes its' inception that mutual respect and understanding facilitate healthy economic relations and provides immediate access to decision makers within business, trade organizations and government. In its nine years of existence, the Bilateral has become the most effective advocate for U.S. business in the Arab world. Monthly programs feature U.S. and/or Arab ambassadors, ministers of trade, commerce, and health, business leaders, opinion leaders and even heads of state. President Mubarak of Egypt, the Emir of Qatar and Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia are a few of the notable dignitaries Bilateral members have been invited to meet. In addition to business events, the Bilateral has also been a key partner with the U.S. State Department's Public Diplomacy Initiative.

Aida Araissi is the executive director and the founder of the Bilateral U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce. Her commitment to promoting U.S.-Arab business relations and educational exchanges is evident in her spirit of volunteerism. She serves as regional member for the Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council for the Middle East and North Africa, and for the Mayor's Advisory Board for International Affairs and Development, she is also on the advisory council to the U.S.-Middle East Fellowship Program and has advised Adam Ereli, deputy spokesperson, with the State Department. Locally she sits on the Arab American Cultural & Community Center board and the Houston-Abu Dhabi Sister City Association.



Aida Araissi

The Bilateral has been a key ally for the City of Houston. The trade missions organized over the years have resulted in a sister city agreement between Houston and Abu Dhabi; airport treaty agreements between Houston and Dubai; Port of Houston agreements and many other large business successes. In April of 2006, the Bilateral will organize another mission to the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait on behalf of Harris County.

This Spring has already been a very active one at the Bilateral, but there's still time to register for the Qatar Science and Technology Park luncheon this March. Qatar has been called one of the most exciting markets in the world. The Bilateral is hosting the Qatar Foundation's visit to Houston March 8, 2006. Other programs include the annual collaboration with the U.S. Commercial Service during the Offshore Technology Conference. This year over 150 high level delegates from Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Libya are expected.

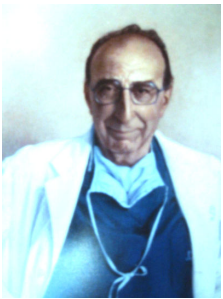
Last but not least, of course, is the U.S.-Arab Economic Forum: *One World. Two Cultures. Endless Possibilities*. After a postponement due to the tragic Katrina devastation, the U.S. Arab Economic Forum has rescheduled for June 26-28. All gathering in Houston, over 1,500 of the world's top business leaders and political heavyweights from the American and Arab league will take center stage for this exciting economic collaboration. For more information, visit www.usarabforum.com.

Special Thanks

Article submitted by Lynnae Willette, program development of the Bilateral U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce.

International Frontier – Michael DeBakey

Every month we focus on a Houstonian who has made an indelible mark on our city through outstanding contributions and services to the growth of Houston as an international city.



Michael DeBakey

In 2008, Dr. Michael DeBakey will be 100 years old and his major contributions to the field of medicine have spanned the better part of 75 years. The father of modern open-heart surgery, DeBakey has been internationally acclaimed as an ingenious medical inventor, gifted teacher, premier surgeon and medical statesman.

DeBakey served as Chairman of the Department of Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine from 1948 to 1993, as President from 1969 to 1979, and as Chancellor from 1979 to 1996. He now serves as Chancellor Emeritus, Distinguished Service Professor and Olga Keith Weiss Professor of Surgery and Director of the DeBakey Heart Center.

Both of DeBakey's parents were first generation Lebanese immigrants who came to the U.S. as children and raised their own children in Lake Charles, Louisiana. A graduate of Tulane University, DeBakey had not even completed medical school when he developed the roller pump, ultimately making the heart lung machine feasible. Globalization is not new to DeBakey. He has served as an advisor to almost every U.S. president in the last 50 years and to heads of state around the world. In 1996, DeBakey traveled to Moscow to consult with President Boris Yeltsin about the leader's grave cardiac illness, and confirmed that he was a good candidate for bypass surgery. According to a 1996 Hearst newspaper article, "DeBakey's professional assessment changed the course of Russian politics."

A leader critically responsible for making the internationally renown Texas Medical Center what it is today, DeBakey single-handedly preserved the

Baylor College of Medicine and wove its association with the Methodist Hospital in Houston. Says DeBakey, "I take pride in the outstanding surgeons I've trained who have returned to their homes throughout the world to provide the best available health care to their patients."

The sculpted bust of DeBakey which stands in the lobby of the Methodist Hospital was commissioned by King Leopold and Princess Lillian of Belgium and unveiled in 1978. At the ceremony, Princess Lillian said, "Dr. DeBakey has provided national and international leadership in fighting cardiovascular disease, and this bust will be a symbol of hope and encouragement to all who come here."

DeBakey is optimistic about the future. "This new century that we're in, it's going to be one of the most exciting in all of history. The medical advances that have taken place since World War II are amazing. I would say this is the best time in the history of the world to be a six-year-old boy. Oh yes. By far, by far!"

– By Mary Jane Wakefield

Did You Know?

In 2001, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) awarded him its Invention of the Year Award for the DeBakey Ventricular Assist Device. Based in part on space shuttle technology, it is a mechanical device that gives failing hearts an extra boost.

Also, in 1992, DeBakey was inducted into the Academy of Athens, a society of scholars founded by the Greek philosopher Plato. Although membership is generally restricted to Greeks who have made exceptional contributions to the arts, science or literature, an exception was made in DeBakey's case, as it was for Albert Einstein and Winston Churchill.

International Houston: Opportunities and Resources

Beginning this issue, we will feature a new column, "International Houston: Opportunities and Resources." This column will provide information on a wide variety of global opportunities as well as international community resources.

2006 College Scholarship Program

Deadline: March 31, 2006

National Association of Asian American Professionals – Houston is inviting high school seniors of Asian Pacific descent enrolled within the Houston Metropolitan area to apply for its 2006 College Scholarship. This year, the Association will award one \$1,000 and two \$500 scholarships. For more information, contact 832-422-4107.

Hispanic Women in Leadership Hall of Fame Awards

Deadline of Nominations: March 15, 2006

Hispanic Women in Leadership "Hall of Fame Awards" is conceived to acknowledge and honor those who have achieved or have made it possible through their efforts for Latina to successfully achieve their goals and realize their full potential in all arenas of life. For more information, contact 713-299-6377.

Office of Congressman Al Green Internship Program

Deadline: Open until filled

Office of Congressman Al Green currently has internship opportunities available for the spring semester. For more information, contact 713-383-9234.

Taiwan's National Science Council Internship Program

Deadline: March 17, 2006

Taiwan's National Science Council announced summer internship program – Taiwan Tech Trek 2006 on Feb 24. The program offers hands-on internship and research experience in Taiwan. Interns will have opportunities to work with the government agencies, research institutes, and technology institutes in Taiwan. For more information, contact 713-963-9433.

Business Coordinator Position

Deadline: Open until filled

TechTrans International, Inc. is seeking a Chinese-speaking employee to fill the position of Business Coordinator. TechTrans is a language services firm that simplifies cross-cultural communication through language translation and interpretation processes, language instruction, logistics, and people. For more information, contact 281-335-8000.

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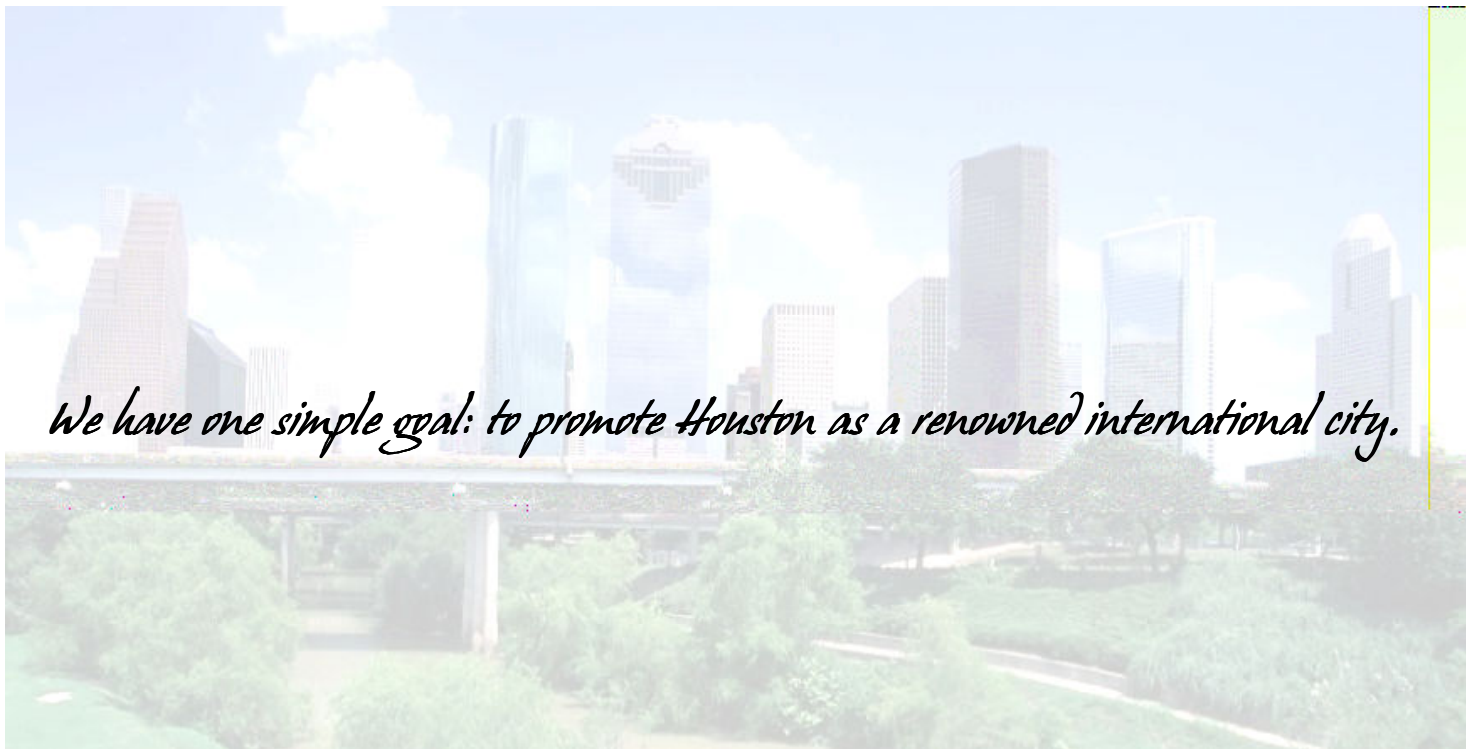
**Next Submission Deadline:
March 20, 2006**

March – 2006 Event Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Venue/Contact
March 1	11:30am-1:30pm	Houston World Affairs Council: The Long War of the 21 st Century, and How We Must Fight It	Venue: Hyatt Regency Hotel Contact: 713-522-7811
March 1	Noon	Greater Houston Partnership: A Cold Call Workshop	Venue: GHP (1200 SMITH) Contact: 713-844-3693
March 1	11:30am	Asia Society Texas: Does the UN have a future?	Venue: Westin Oaks Hotel Contact: 713-439-0265
March 1	6:00pm	Asia Society Texas: Bookless in Baghdad	Venue: Madras Pavilion Contact: 713-439-0265
March 1	7:00pm	Belgian Trade Commission: Gala de la Francophonie 2006	Venue: La Colombe d'Or Contact: 713-863-1110
March 3	--	City of Houston: Delegation led by Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to the U.S.	Venue: -- Contact: 713-668-2744
March 3	9:00am-6:00pm	Rice Alliance: 5 th Annual Life Sciences Technology	Venue: Rice University Contact: 713-348-3443
March 3	6:00pm	Asia Society Texas: Avian Flu-How Serious is the Threat?	Venue: Westin Galleria Hotel Contact: 713-439-0265
March 3	6:30pm	Council Member Peter Brown and the Gulf Coast Institute: Houston in Maps	Venue: 3911 Main Street Contact: 713-247-2014
March 3	6:00pm	Spring Gala of Wong Family Benevolent Association	Venue: Ocean Palace Restaurant Contact: 281-265-5533
March 3	8:30am-3:45pm	UH-GEMI: 2 nd Annual Symposium – Should we site it here?	Venue: UH Hilton Hotel Contact: 713-743-4885
March 4	6:30pm	Houston Taiwanese Benevolent Association: Gala and Dancing Evening	Venue: 10303 Westoffice Drive Contact: ahairbox@hotmail.com
March 4	7:00pm-10:00pm	Yellow Magazine: 1 ST Anniversary of Yellow Magazine	Venue: Royalton at River Oaks Contact: event@yellowmags.com
March 4-5&10-11	8:00pm	Et Voila Theatre: Autant Dire	Venue: Talento Bilingue de Houston Contact: 713-863-1110
March 5	5:30pm	Houston Young Artist's Concert: Ryu Goto and Friends	Venue: Zilkha Hall, Hobby Center Contact: 281-870-0674
March 5	6:00pm	Houston Asian Junior Chamber of Commerce: 21 st Inaugural Ball	Venue: Hilton Hotel Westheimer Contact: ombern@yahoo.com
March 6	Noon-2:00pm	Greater Houston Partnership: Greece, Business Opportunities for Houston Companies	Venue: GHP (1200 SMITH) Contact: 713-844-3636
March 7	7:30am-5:30pm	Microsoft 2006 Global Energy Forum	Venue: Hilton Americas Hotel Contact: 713-658-1750

March 7	11:00am-1:30pm	Japan-America Society of Houston: Tomorrow's Economy Today, Business in the Asian Marketplace	Venue: Petroleum Club Contact: 713-963-0121
March 7	6:00pm-7:30pm	Houston World Affairs Council: Greece Today, Business and Cultural Connections to Houston	Venue: The Junior League Contact: 713-522-7811
March 8	11:30am-1:30pm	Bilateral US-Arab Chamber of Commerce: Qatar Foundation Science & Technology Program	Venue: The Petroleum Club Contact: 713-880-8168
March 8	11:30am-1:15pm	Asian Chamber of Commerce: Monthly Luncheon featuring Daniel Frishberg	Venue: Westin Galleria Hotel Contact: 713-782-7222
March 8	4:30pm-6:00pm	Port of Houston Authority: How to do business with the Port of Houston Authority	Venue: PHA Executive Building Contact: 713-670-2588
March 8	7:30pm	Japan-America Society of Houston: The YALTA Conference and RONIN Office Ladies	Venue: Zilhka Hall, Hobby Center Contact: 713-315-2525
March 9	7:30am-1:00pm	Greater Houston Partnership: Emerging Business Council Learning Summit	Venue: Hilton Americas Hotel Contact: 713-844-3692
March 9	8:30am	Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce: Increasing Hispanic Business Opportunities Through Second Tier Initiatives	Venue: TBD Contact: 713-644-7070
March 9	6:00pm-7:30pm	Houston World Affairs Council: The Community Counts, Citizen Diplomacy and America's Image in the World	Venue: The Junior League Contact: 713-522-7811
March 9	11:00am-1:00pm	Memorial Herman-Texas Medical Center: Go Red for Women	Venue: Memorial Herman Contact: 713-704-6186
March 9	10:00am-Noon	Japan-America Society of Houston: Learn the Art of Japanese Flower Arrangement	Venue: JASH Office Contact: 713-963-0121
March 10	11:30am	Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce: 13 th Annual Membership & Corporate Partners Luncheon	Venue: Hilton Americas Hotel Contact: 713-644-7070
March 10	8:00am-10:30am	Greater Houston Partnership: Doing Business with PEMEX	Venue: GHP (1200 SMITH) Contact: 713-844-3636
March 10	8:30am-5:00pm	Ex-Im Bank: Lenders Training Program for bankers	Venue: Hilton Hotel Post Oak Contact: 281-721-0467
March 15	7:30am	Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce: Networking Breakfast & Mini-Trade Fair	Venue: Westin Oaks Hotel Contact: 713-644-7070
March 16	6:00pm-7:30pm	Houston World Affairs Council: Nuclear Iran and the West, Intentions and Options	Venue: The Junior League Contact: 713-522-7811
March 17	Noon-1:30pm	Greater Houston Partnership: Luncheon featuring Lieutenant General Thomas F. Metz	Venue: Westin Galleria Hotel Contact: 713-844-3695
March 21	Noon-1:30pm	Greater Houston Partnership: Congress and the Economy in 2006 luncheon featuring the Honorable John Cornyn	Venue: InterContinental Hotel Contact: 713-844-3600
March 22	5:30pm	Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce: After Hours Networking Mixer	Venue: TBD Contact: 713-644-7070

March 23-26	--	Tri-County Black Chamber of Commerce: International Trade Mission – Belize	Venue: Belize City, Belize Contact: 713-353-0386
March 23	6:00pm-7:30pm	Houston World Affairs Council: Building a Better World – Creating Public and Private Partnerships for Global Development	Venue: The Junior League Contact: 713-522-7811
March 23,24	N.A.	Belgian Trade Commission: A Celebration of Life	Venue: InterContinental Hotel Contact: 713-957-1600
March 25	10:00am-2:00pm	HCCS/Southwest College: Community Festival	Venue: 13803 Bissonnet Contact: 713 -718-6911
March26 -April 13	--	City of Houston Mayor’s Office: Delegation led by the Director of Xi’an Municipal Government	Venue: -- Contact: Helen Chang 713-247-3595
March 28	9:00am	Hispanic Women in Leadership: Mujeres De Las Americas Event	Venue: Reliant Stadium Park Contact: 713-238-1475
March 29-31	--	Diversity Business: 6th Annual National Multicultural Business Conference	Venue: Las Vegas Contact: noreply@usmailsolutions.com
March30 -April 1	--	Rice Alliance: Business Plan Competition	Venue: Rice University Contact: 713-348-3443



The contents are intended for general information purposes only.